



INL awards subcontracts to small businesses throughout Idaho. To boost partnerships with businesses in central Idaho (zone 2), information was provided to business owners at the recent Business Opportunity Conference.

Conference highlights business opportunities for Idaho firms

by [Marilyn Whitney](#), INL Communications & Governmental Affairs

Finding new customers and boosting sales in a tough economy offer many challenges. But more than 400 Idaho business owners, manufacturers, contractors and service providers are focusing on new opportunities. They recently gathered to network, learn and share information on how businesses can match their products and services with the purchasing needs of the Northwest's largest corporations and government contractors.

The majority of federal purchases under \$100,000 are set aside for small businesses, which offers many Idaho firms a new channel to market their goods and services. The annual Idaho Business Opportunity Conference held this November in Nampa, Idaho, provided small companies from across the state with information on how to work with contractors like Idaho National Laboratory. As a primary sponsor, INL partnered with the state [Department of Commerce](#) and its Idaho [Procurement Technical Assistance Center](#) (PTAC) on this year's event. Since 1985, Idaho PTAC (formerly known as the Idaho Business Network) has helped Idaho's small businesses secure more than \$500 million in awards and sales.

Dana Storms, INL Small Business Program manager, led a conference workshop to share strategies on how small businesses can target procurement opportunities at the lab. Storms shared the principles for what she terms "knowledge-based marketing" to help businesses identify how their products and services can match specific INL needs. Basic principles such as attention to detail and responsiveness are also important, she said, because they increase the likelihood of a successful proposal.



At the conference, small business owners received information about partnering with INL.

Other workshops at the conference focused on the federal government's Small Business Administration programs and General Services Administration processes and procedures. In addition to INL, presenting sponsors included CH2M-WG Idaho, Portage, Washington Closure Hanford and Washington River Protection Solutions. More than 40 participating buyers staffed information booths and answered questions throughout the day.



INL has awarded \$520 million in contracts to [Idaho businesses](#) over the past five years.
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The conference lunch seminar featured Greg Wray, INL's Director of Supply Chain Management, who highlighted the lab's commitment to doing business in Idaho. Since 2005, INL has awarded \$520 million worth of business to Idaho firms. INL expects to award \$106 million to Idaho businesses in fiscal 2010.

The next opportunity for businesses to learn about working with INL is the [Idaho Business & Technology Expo](#), Jan. 27-28, in Boise, Idaho.

View Greg Wray's presentation "[Knowledge Based Marketing - Keys to Marketing to the INL.](#)"
 View Dana Storms' presentation "[Commitment to Idaho Businesses.](#)"

Read coverage of the conference from the [Idaho Business Review](#).